



U.S. Department of Justice

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WOMAN SENTENCED FOR
MISDEMEANOR THEFT FROM THE UNITED STATES

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – United States Attorney Tom Colantuono reports that Afton Rodriguez was sentenced to one year of probation and a \$1,000.00 fine for stealing Social Security benefit payments that were mistakenly paid to her deceased mother's bank account.

Rodriguez, who is 44-years old, is from Marlborough, New Hampshire. Her mother passed away on June 15, 2001. At the time of her death, Rodriguez's mother was receiving monthly Social Security benefit payments of \$956.00. These funds were directly deposited into her checking account. The Social Security Administration mistakenly continued to make these benefit payments after Rodriguez's mother's death.

Between June 2001 and September 2003, Rodriguez used her signatory authority on her mother's bank account to steal \$25,523.00 in mistakenly paid Social Security benefits. When the Social Security Administration discovered the loss, Rodriguez paid restitution of the full amount. She then agreed to plead guilty to misdemeanor theft from the United States and entered a guilty plea to this crime on October 18, 2004.

United States Attorney Tom Colantuono said, "Protecting the integrity of the Social Security system is central to insuring that it will be able to continue to serve those who depend on receiving hard-earned benefit payments. I am pleased that the full amount of the loss was recovered in this case and trust that the sentence in this case demonstrates that those who steal Social Security benefits will pay a high price."

This case was investigated by the Office of the Inspector General for the Social Security Administration and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Mark S. Zuckerman.

